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Historical Commission Minutes 04-03-2001

Meeting of Tuesday, April 3 (postponed from March 6) 2001
Whittemore-Robbins House, 7:30 PM

Call to Order: Robert Botterio, chairman, presiding; commissioners Jane Becker, Beth Cohen, Patrick Guthrie, Pam Meister, JoAnn Robinson, and Michael Ruderman; associate Eric Stange, secretary Lyz Carey.

Minutes of the last meeting held 6 February 2001 (the March meeting having been postponed due to a severe snowstorm): approved.

Communications

Beth Cohen, a former chair of this commission, regretfully resigned the seat she has held for the last fourteen years. She cited work and travel obligations as the reason for her decision. Mr. Botterio accepted the resignation, and expressed for all present the great thanks of the town for her service. He noted that Ms. Cohen will continue to serve as the chair of the Historic Districts Commission, and will be pleased to keep in touch with her concerning those activities.

Mr. Stange has expressed his willingness to be recommended for the now-vacant post as the seventh commissioner to Mr. Botterio. The commission voted unanimously to endorse Mr. Botterio's request to the Selectmen to appoint Mr. Stange as commissioner.

Other items related by Mr. Botterio:

Gene Ferola, owner of 22 Webster Street, inquired about replacing the windows in his inventoried structure; upon inspection, the project falls below the 25% threshold requiring a hearing.

Dr. Claude Fontaine, owner of 251 Massachusetts Avenue, had a similar inquiry. When Mr. Botterio asked for an estimation of the scope of the work, the architect for the project suggested restoring the windows with like materials instead of replacing them; the suggestion was heartily accepted.

Mr. Botterio will meet at a later date with Catherine Harriman, owner of 19 Maple Street, with suggestions for replacing the porch in the rear of her home.

Heather Whittington, of 22 Elmhurst, inquired about the status of 174 Brooks Avenue. Mr. Botterio and Ms. Meister ascertained that the new owners (Christopher Reilly and Michelle Willey, from a March 2001 conveyance) intend to renovate, and not demolish, this house. Although not inventoried, Mr. Ruderman's research shows this house would certainly merit inclusion: it was built in 1873 for Martha and Addison Brooks of Lake Street, whose property surrounded the Lake Street railroad station. Ms. Becker will take note of the property and of the interested party in plans for expansion of the inventory.

Review of Projects

125 Brattle Lane/Farmer's Lane (Colonial Ridge LLC) 11/99: Robinson-waiting to hear back from the developer regarding the siding and window casements stripped away from the house.

143 Woodside (Bouvier) 7/00: Guthrie-house featured in a Boston *Globe* article describing the work of color consultants. Interior is almost complete.

1167 Mass. Ave. (Mirak) 9/00: Guthrie-no news.

23 Maple Street (Town of Arlington) 11/00: Robinson, Guthrie-no exterior work has begun.

45 Fairview Avenue (Trvalik) 12/00: Botterio-work has not begun.

4 Mystic Bank (Keane) 12/00: Ruderman-finished, in accordance with plans.

19 Winter Street (McGlashing) 2/01: Ruderman- change requested and denied in hearing decision, as detailed below: Curt Morgan, architect, and contractor Martin Conneely were concerned about the effect of reducing the ridge height by one foot on what we have been calling the third section of the house. Our logic for that was to preserve a visual

difference between the two parts, and, along with the application of a cornerboard at the same point, maintain the appearance of a house extended in stages over time (rather than something resembling an apartment block).

Their concerns were twofold: the esthetic of maintaining unbroken horizontal lines along the friezeboards and window tops, and a worry that water will not drain properly off a roof in two sections, but will course down the cornerboard.

Mr. Botterio and Mr. Guthrie both provided helpful insights. Despite strong internal evidence that the entire extension was built as one project (Mr. Ruderman found consistent mortise-and-tenon joints throughout the framing timbers, secured with wooden pegs, in the upright posts and their wind braces at either side of the extension), we should maintain our position from the formal hearing. That is, we shall require a visible distinction between parts of the extension to relieve the "block" effect. Concerns regarding drainage and horizontal consistency would not change this requirement, whether raised at the proper time (in the hearing) or thereafter.

Demolitions Pending

7 Brattle Court (David and Danny Veo, owners): August 1, 2001

962 Massachusetts Avenue (Rita Yegian, owner): November 8, 2001

5 Brattle Court (Mike Daniel, owner): November 8, 2001

No news regarding these properties.

Reports

Whittemore-Robbins House: Carey-the house hosted 67 events in the past year ending December 31, generating income about 8% in excess of expenses. The total of the revolving fund (all accumulated revenues minus expenses) has surpassed \$26,000. Ms. Robinson has discussed with Patsy Kraemer the possibility of using some of this total for landscaping (behind the house toward Maple Street and the decorative iron gate which once graced the Pattee estate and was relocated for the building of Town Hall). There is also the possibility of hiring a student from the Stockbridge Agricultural-Horticultural School (Univ. of Mass., Amherst) to do summer maintenance on the gardens. Finally, Mr. Stange thanks everyone for their help in his recent filming of scenes from his next documentary within these very rooms.

Arlington Civic Block Garden: Robinson-see above.

Updates and Expansion to Inventory: Cohen, Meister, Guthrie, Stange-no report.

Inventory of public buildings: Stange and Robinson-no report.

Inventory of significant lots: Mr. Ruderman will have finished his analysis for the next meeting. The matter will be taken up next time as new business.

Education/Outreach: Stange, Botterio-no report.

Massachusetts Avenue (Osco): Robinson-nothing to report.

Affordable Housing Task Force: Stange-the fruit of their efforts is town meeting warrant article 16, whose passage would mandate a component of affordable in housing in applicable developments. This commission endorses its passage. The complete text for all articles is here: **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Zoning By-Law Review Committee: Meister-this group has submitted three warrant articles: No. 13, regarding maximum heights, and Nos. 14 and 15 concerning open space and open space properties.

Historic Districts Commission: Ms. Cohen will recommend a new contact.

Old Burying Ground survey and assessment-Robinson-no report.

Preservation Fund-Guthrie-several applications are to be considered soon. Mr. Botterio also mentioned that he will nominate Mr. Guthrie for inclusion on the board of the fund.

New Business

Informal hearing regarding contemplated changes to **9 Brantwood Road**: Timothy Stainton, owner, with Sylvie Kelly; Matt Miller and Stephanie Mai of Miller Boehm Architects (23A Warren Avenue, Boston)

This home, within the April 1894 subdivision "Kensington Park," is a leading example of Queen Anne/Shingle Style architecture in Arlington. It was built (and presumably designed) by the architect C(harles) Herbert McClare. We can find McClare's prominent advertisement in the 1894 Lothrop town directory ("fine residences a specialty/613 Main Street, Cambridgeport") giving as his "Residence, Kensington Park, Arlington," while the specific listings of individuals for that year notes that he "boards (at) 85 Pleasant (Street)." Noting that McClare acquired this house/lot from his fellow trustees of the Kensington Park Association in September 1895, Mr. Ruderman sets the date of construction as 1895.

Mr. Miller presented a remarkable series of boards, models, and comparisons with other renowned examples of this period in architecture to illustrate his clients' ideas for both restoring and expanding portions of their home. The particular options will be considered at the next meeting of the commission in a formal hearing to begin at 8:00 PM.

The commission discussed a number of warrant articles which will be presented for consideration to the **Town Meeting** beginning April 23. The commission voted unanimously (with the single abstention of Ms. Meister, a town

meeting member) to oppose Article 17, the proposed rezoning of 821 Massachusetts Avenue from B2 to B4. This article, if passed, would enable the expansion of the Hogdon-Noyes auto dealership onto this parcel (as explained by the proponents of the article to the Redevelopment Board at its March 19 meeting). Passage of the article essentially dictates the demolition of an inventoried structure, and is thus opposed.

Mr. Ruderman related his impressions of the "Back to Basics" conference sponsored by Historic Massachusetts, Inc. in Middleboro on March 31. Arlington is well beyond the basics of formulating a preservation plan, initiating an inventory of its historic assets, and passing and administering a demolition delay bylaw. Mr. Stange and Mr. Guthrie will take the information Mr. Ruderman received on grants for expanding a town's inventory on report back at the next meeting.

Mr. Ruderman will also circulate a request for volunteers to assist the commission in a variety of endeavors, surveying to expand the inventory, and researching houses for historic markers in particular.

Finally, we noted with great sadness the loss of our former commissioner Pat Fitzmaurice in February. Mr. Ruderman will consider the design of a memorial plaque, and Ms. Robinson will look into its cost.

Confirming the next meeting for May 1, 2001 this meeting closed at 10:40 PM.

For the Arlington Historical Commission,
A. Michael Ruderman, Commissioner